9. Around 31111 sq. km. of critical/core tiger habitat identified in 17 States

10. Memorandum of Understanding developed for better/concerted implementation of conservation inputs through tiger reserve States.

**Financial steps**

11. Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.* Project Tiger and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

**International Cooperation**

12. India has a Memorandum of Understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China.

13. A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

14. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

**Forest cover**

1452. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total cover of forests in the country, State-wise as in 2007;

(b) the present level of forest covers as compared to 25 years back in the country, State-wise;

(c) whether the present level of forest cover affects the environment of the country thereby creating severe climatic changes; and

(d) if so, action plan under the serious consideration of the Government to improve the forest covers across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) The Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, makes an assessment of forest cover in the country on biennial basis. The earliest forest

cover information of the country is available for the reference year 1987. The latest forest cover information has been released in the State of Forest Report 2005. A comparative account of the forest cover in 1987 and 2005, state-wise is given below:

Area in $Km^2$

| State/UTs | Geographic Area | Forest Cover (SFR 1987) | Forest Cover (SFR 2005) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Andhra Pradesh | 275,069 | 49,573 | 44,372 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 83,743 | 64,132 | 67,777 |
| Assam | 78,438 | 25,160 | 27,645 |
| Bihar | 94,163 | 28,482 | 5,579 |
| Chhattisgarh | 135,191 | — | 55,863 |
| Delhi | 1,483 | 15 | 176 |
| Goa | 3,702 | 1,240 | 2,164 |
| Gujarat | 196,022 | 11,991 | 14,715 |
| Haryana | 44,212 | 513 | 1,587 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 55,673 | 12,480 | 14,369 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 222,236 | 20,905 | 21,273 |
| Jharkhand | 79,714 | 32,268 | 22,591 |
| Karnataka | 191,791 | 10,292 | 35,251 |
| Kerala | 38,863 | 130,099 | 15,595 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 308,245 | — | 76,013 |
| Maharashtra | 307,713 | 45,616 | 47,476 |
| Manipur | 22,327 | 17,475 | 17,086 |
| Meghalaya | 22,429 | 16,466 | 16,988 |
| Mizoram | 21,081 | 19,084 | 18,684 |
| Nagaland | 16,579 | 14,394 | 13,719 |
| Orissa | 155,707 | 53,253 | 48,374 |
| Punjab | 50,362 | 943 | 1,558 |
| Rajasthan | 342,239 | 12,758 | 15,850 |
| Sikkim | 7,096 | 2,756 | 3,262 |
| Tamil Nadu | 130,058 | 17,472 | 23,044 |
| Tripura | 10,486 | 5,953 | 8,155 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 240,928 | 31,226 | 14,127 |
| Uttarakhand | 53,483 | — | 24,442 |
| West Bengal | 88,752 | 8,432 | 12,413 |
| Andaman & Nicobar | 8,249 | 7,601 | 6,629 |
| Chandigarh | 114 | 2 | 15 |
| Dadra & Nagar Haveli | 491 | 238 | 221 |
| Daman & Diu | 112 | 0 | 8 |
| Lakshadweep | 32 | 0 | 25 |
| Pondicherry | 480 | 0 | 42 |
| TOTAL | 3,287,263 | 640,819 | 677,088 |

(c) As can be seen from the table above that the forest cover in the country has increased by 36,269 sq.km. in the past 18 years. A good forest cover helps in moderating extremes of the climatic changes.

(d) To further improve the forest cover in the country the following steps have been taken by the Ministry.

1. The Ministry is implementing National Afforestation Programme (NAP) through the Forest Development Agencies (FDA) at the forest division level and the Joint Forest Management Committees at the village level. The progress of NAP scheme as on 15.02.2008 is:

| | |
|---|---|
| • No. of approved FDA projects: | 753 |
| • Cost of the projects (Rs. in crores): | 2063.8 |
| • Release made so far (Rs. in crores): | 1461.1 |
| • Project Area (million ha): | 1.34 |
| • No. of JFM committees (JFMCs): | 26772 |

2. Ministry has launched Grants-in-Aid for Greening India Scheme in Tenth Plan to augment production and use of Quality Planting Material (QPM) so that productivity of public and private land plantations is increased, and individuals and communities are encouraged to take up more tree planting.

3. A new Scheme, Gram Van Yojana (GVY), has been mooted for afforestation on non-forest lands involving PRIs. Scheme to be launched in Eleventh Plan for which an allocation of Rs. 900 crores has been made.

4. New Eco-Task Force (ETF) Battalions of ex-service men are being established in collaboration with the States to regenerate difficult and inaccessible areas. Two new ETF battalions are being raised for Assam during the year.

**Level of pollution**

†1453. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:
DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Department of Meteorology of India has conducted a study regarding level of pollution in some cities of India;

(b) whether it is also a fact that after the initial showers of rain, testing done of the sample of water of these cities and nearby areas revealed that levels of sulfer dioxide and nitrogen oxide were high in the water which reach atmosphere through the polluted gases emitted by vehicles, thermal power plants and industries;

(c) whether it is also a fact that chances of catching Alzheimer disease are increased after drinking polluted water or eating vegetables produced by this polluted water; and

(d) if so, the measures taken for checking and eliminating the pollution?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.